

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OGEN (ASSISTANT SECRETARY INGERSOLL)

SUBJECT: WEEKLY WRAP-UP ON EAST ASIAN AFFAIRS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY INGERSOLL

1. THE FOLLOWING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS
IN THE EAST ASIAN AREA IS TRANSMITTED FOR YOUR INFORMATION.

2. THE US-JAPAN SECURITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING--
THE SCC CONVENED IN TOKYO JANUARY 30 TO PUT ITS STAMP ON
THE REALIGNMENT AND CONSOLIDATION PACKAGE FOR OKINAWA
WHICH WAS NEGOTIATED IN RECENT MONTHS. THE TOTAL RE-
LEASE OF SEVEN AND PARTIAL RELEASE OF THIRTEEN INSTALLA-
TIONS WITHOUT RELOCATION WAS ANNOUNCED AS WELL AS THE
TOTAL RELEASE OF TWELVE AND PARTIAL RELEASE OF SIX ADDI-
TIONAL FACILITIES, SUBJECT TO AGREEMENT ON RELOCATION
ARRANGEMENTS AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION. THE REDUCTIONS
WILL RESULT IN A 29 PERCENT DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF
U.S. INSTALLATIONS AND ABOUT A 10 PERCENT REDUCTION IN
AREA USED BY U.S. FORCES ON OKINAWA. (UNCLASSIFIED)

3. THE CHINA ISSUE IN INTELSAT--WE HAVE RECEIVED RES-
PONSES FROM 22 OF THE 26 COUNTRIES WE APPROACHED ON THE
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CHINA ISSUE IN INTELSAT. WHILE MOST COUNTRIES WERE NOT
SANGUINE ABOUT THE OUTCOME IF A VOTE WERE TAKEN ON THE
REPRESENTATION QUESTION, ALL SEEM TO AGREE THAT ROC

ACCESS TO THE INTELSAT SYSTEM AS A NONMEMBER SHOULD BE PRESERVED.

4. PRC-USSR RELATIONS--PEKING HAS FOLLOWED UP THE JANUARY 19 EXPULSION OF SOVIET DIPLOMATS ON SPYING CHARGES WITH A STRONGLY WORDED PROTEST AGAINST THE SOVIET RETALIATORY EXPULSION OF A CHINESE DIPLOMAT, AND A PEOPLE'S DAILY ARTICLE TYING THE SOVIET THREAT DIRECTLY TO THE ANTI-CONFUCIUS CAMPAIGN.

5. ACCORDING TO AN EAST EUROPEAN DIPLOMAT IN PEKING, THE RUSSIAN NEGOTIATOR FOR THE PRC-USSR BORDER TALKS, ILICHEV, WILL NOT RETURN TO PEKING SINCE TALKS ARE AT A COMPLETE STALEMATE IN THE WAKE OF THE EXPULSION OF THE SOVIET DIPLOMATS.

6. A SCATHING PEOPLE'S DAILY "COMMENTATOR" ATTACK ON A CHINA DOCUMENTARY MADE BY ITALIAN DIRECTOR ANTONIONI WAS ALSO LINKED TO SOVIET ANTI-CHINA ACTIVITIES. THE AUTHORITATIVE ARTICLE DID NOT STATE THAT ANTONIONI WORKED FOR MOSCOW BUT CHARGED THAT HE HAS "PARROTED THE BANKRUPT ANTI-CHINA PROPAGANDA OF THE SOVIET REVISIONISTS."

7. THE SOVIETS HAVE AVOIDED DIRECTLY COMMENTING ON THE CONFLICTING CLAIMS OF THE PRC AND SAIGON TO THE PARACELS, BUT HAVE REPLAYED JAPANESE AND INDIAN PRESS REPORTS ON THE SINO-VIETNAMESE CLASH THAT REFER TO CHINA'S 'AGGRESSIVE CLAWS' AND "EXPANSIONIST INCLINATIONS." TASS ALSO REPORTED A JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN'S ASSERTION OF JAPANESE CLAIMS TO THE SENKAKUS.

8. THE PARACEL ISLAND DISPUTE--WE BELIEVE THAT THE BRIEF SHARP CLASH WHICH BEGAN AND ENDED DURING THE WEEKEND OF 18-20 JANUARY DOES NOT SIGNAL A CHINESE DRIVE TO THE SOUTH DOWN THE CHAINS OF DISPUTED ISLANDS. THE FIGHTING RESULTED WHEN THE GVN REACTED TO FLAG-PLANTING BY
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CHINESE FISHERMEN ON AN ISLAND IN THAT PORTION OF THE PARACELS, WHICH HAD BEEN UNDER DE FACTO GVN CONTROL. BOTH SIDES CALLED IN REINFORCEMENTS AND WHAT HAD BEEN A VERBAL TERRITORIAL DISPUTE WAS RAISED TO THE LEVEL OF ARMED CONFRONTATION. THE VIETNAMESE CLEARLY DID NOT EXPECT THE STRONG CHINESE USE OF FORCE THAT FOLLOWED.

9. INTELLIGENCE AND OTHER INDICATIONS REVEAL NO PRC INTENTION TO MOVE MILITARILY IN SUPPORT OF HER CLAIMS TO THE SPRATLEY ISLANDS, SOME OF WHICH ARE ALSO CLAIMED AND GARRISONED BY THE PHILIPPINES AND THE ROC AS WELL

AS THE GVN. THE PRC'S PROMPT RETURN OF GERALD KOSH AND

SOME SOUTH VIETNAMESE PRISONERS, A RAPID FALL-OFF IN PROPAGANDA, AND THE DECLINE OF MILITARY OPERATIONS IN THE PARACEL AREA PLUS NONE IN THE SPRATLEYS ALL SUGGEST THAT CHINA DOES NOT INTEND TO PURSUE FURTHER MILITARY MOVES IN THE DISPUTED ISLANDS, AT LEAST AT THE PRESENT TIME. THIS IS SUPPORTED BY PRC VICE FOREIGN MINISTER CH'IAO KUAN-HUA'S REMARKS TO NEW ZEALAND AMBASSADOR HARLAND ON JANUARY 26 THAT PEKING IS WILLING TO NEGOTIATE TERRITORIAL QUESTIONS AND TO TRY TO SOLVE THEM PEACEFULLY. CH'IAO SAID, HOWEVER, THAT IF OTHER PARTIES PURSUE THEIR CLAIMS BY FORCE, CHINA WILL RESPOND IN KIND. HE SAID THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED IN THE PARACELS.

10. HOWEVER, THERE ARE CONFIRMED REPORTS THAT SAIGON HAS DEPLOYED A SMALL NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL FORCES TO THE SPRATLEYS IN THE LAST FEW DAYS (THERE ARE ALREADY 60-70 GVN TROOPS ON ONE ISLAND OF THAT GROUP). THE VIETNAMESE INTENTION IS TO CREATE AN RVN PRESENCE ONLY ON UNOCCUPIED ISLANDS. THE VIETNAMESE NAVY HAS BEEN ORDERED NOT TO ENGAGE IN ANY HOSTILE ACTION TOWARD FORCES ALREADY IN THE AREA.

11. PEKING WILL DOUBTLESS VIEW SAIGON'S LATEST STEP AS PROVOCATIVE. IN THE SHORT RUN, WE ANTICIPATE THAT THE PRC WILL ISSUE A STRONG STATEMENT CONDEMNING THE VIETNAMESE MOVE AND WARNING VAGUELY THAT SAIGON WILL EAT ITS OWN BITTER FRUIT. A REPETITION OF CHINA'S

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DETERMINED MILITARY ACTION IN THE PARACELS, HOWEVER, WOULD BE A MORE DIFFICULT UNDERTAKING BOTH PHYSICALLY AND POLITICALLY.

12. THAI FOREIGN POLICY--ON JANUARY 16 THE THAI FOREIGN MINISTER GAVE A MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY ADDRESS, THE FIRST SUCH FORMAL STATEMENT BY THE SANYA GOVERNMENT, IN WHICH HE STRESSED THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

--THAI FOREIGN POLICY MUST BE ADAPTED ON THE BASIS OF "REALISM" TO CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES.

-- REGIONAL COOPERATION (E.G. ASEAN) IS A KEY ELEMENT OF THAI FOREIGN POLICY AND SEA NEUTRALIZATION IS A MAJOR GOAL, EVEN THOUGH NOT REALIZABLE UNTIL AFTER PEACE IS RESTORED IN INDO-CHINA.

--THAILAND MUST GUARD AGAINST "ANY MEDDLING IN OUR INTERNAL AFFAIRS BY ANY FRIEND NO MATTER HOW WELL INTENTIONED."

--THAI RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. WILL HAVE TO BE MODIFIED TO ACHIEVE "A MORE TRULY BALANCED RELATIONSHIP" WITH

LESS EMPHASIS ON MILITARY COOPERATION AND MORE CONCERN
FOR THAI SELF-RELIANCE.

--RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION SHOULD BE FURTHER
DEVELOPED.

--THAILAND SHOULD SEEK FRIENDSHIP WITH ALL NATIONS
"IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR IDEALOGY AND SOCIAL AND
ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS", INCLUDING THE PRC.

--JAPAN SHOULD PLAY A MORE SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN PROMOTING
STABILITY AND PROSPERITY IN THIS AREA, AND ECONOMIC
RELATIONS BETWEEN THAILAND AND JAPAN SHOULD TAKE INTO
ACCOUNT THAILAND'S DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES.

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